



NEW JERSEY CREATIVE VITALITY INDEX 2010
**Sector Spotlight: Self-Employed Artists, Writers and
Performers in New Jersey**

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ARTISTS, WRITERS AND PERFORMERS

There are more self-employed artists, writers and performers throughout New Jersey

Key facts:

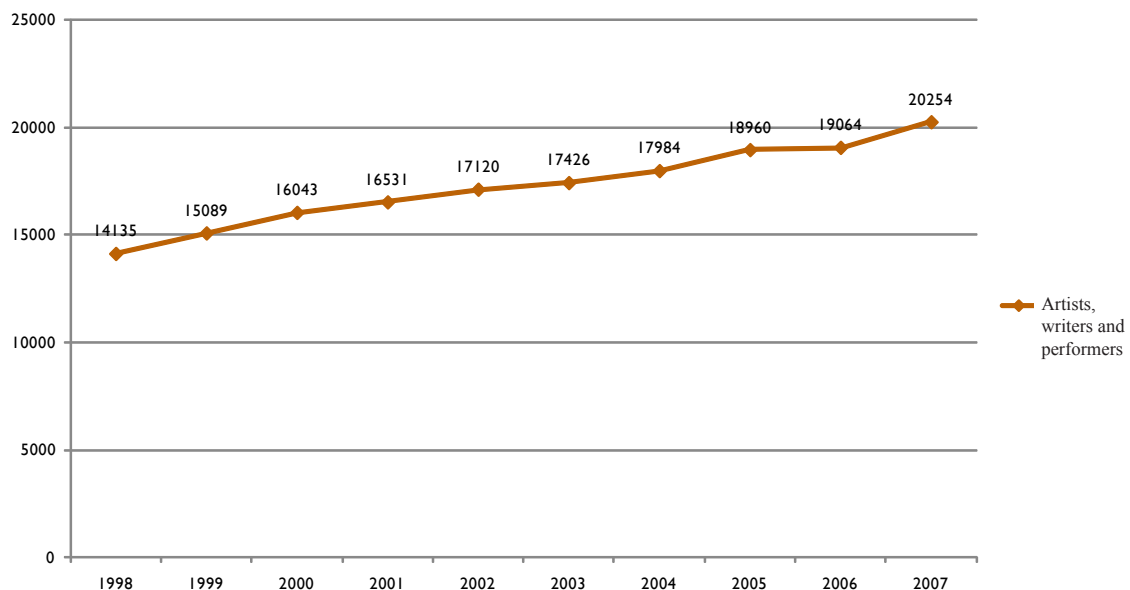
- The number of self-employed artists, writers and performers in New Jersey grew from 14,100 to 20,300 – a 43% increase from 1998 to 2007. This outpaced the 27% growth in all self-employed businesses in New Jersey.
- All 21 counties had increases in number of self-employed artists, writers and performers.
- Growth has been steady statewide, regardless of whether the economy was growing or in recession.
- The largest numbers are in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris and Camden counties in both 1998 and 2007.
- The fastest proportional growth has been in the western and southern counties, as well as Hudson County.
- Growth in self-employed artists, writers and performers far outpaced 7% population growth for all of New Jersey between 1998 and 2007.



14,100 artistes,
writers and performers
1998

20,300 artists,
writers and performers
2007

Figure 1: Self-employed artists, writers and performers in New Jersey, 1998 to 2007



Note: In the following pages “artists” refers to self-employed artist, writers and performers.

Why this is important to...

Elected officials

- There is probably a growing presence of artists in your municipality. Self-employed artists are not just flocking to established arts destinations – they are moving throughout New Jersey.
- Artists need spaces to work, and most want spaces to sell their artworks. You might see an increase in home studios, or a growing demand to turn vacant commercial spaces into galleries and places for artists to gather.
- Because it is so difficult to make a living wage as an independent artist, many artists have a variety of skills that they can use to support civic activities in your community. Artists tend to be among the first group of people involved in revitalization and beautification efforts in communities.
- Artists are among the most mobile parts of the creative economy. And unlike certain businesses, they can be located almost anywhere. If more are moving into your community, it is because they get some set of benefits there they don't find elsewhere. Find out what they are if you want to attract more artists.

Cultural professionals

- Wherever you are in New Jersey, this helps to show that the arts are a growing presence everywhere in the state.
- If you live or work in a county that is not usually known for the arts, this can strengthen efforts to build networks of artists and other cultural professionals. When organized into arts councils, artists can have more influence in their municipalities and counties.
- If you live or work in a county that is known for the arts, this can help demonstrate that the efforts of governments and cultural organizations to promote the arts is working to bring more artists to your county.
- There is a larger and growing pool of talent in your community.

Public administrators and urban planners

- Self-employed artists are micro-enterprises. Like any small business, they want easy access to resources, distributors and customers. They want affordable places to work, and maybe sell their works.
- The key resources for artists (besides materials) are knowledge and art. Like all small businesses, artists like to connect with their peers and they get inspiration from connecting with the arts. Consider encouraging more cultural activities in your community if you want to keep and retain more artists.
- Art tends to lead to more art. Expect artists to want leaders to attract more cultural uses.
- If your community does not allow home-based businesses (such as studios), you may want to modify regulations if you want to keep and attract more artists.
- There is a growing talent pool for members of architectural, urban design, historic preservation and other boards.
- While self-employed artists are among the first to be involved in revitalization efforts, they also tend to be affected when gentrification makes residential properties and commercial spaces unaffordable to low and moderate-income people. In areas that are revitalizing because of the arts, planners and administrators should consider measures to mitigate gentrification.

Economic development professionals

- A growing presence of self-employed artists could indicate a growing presence of cultural uses, or an environment more open to cultural uses. This creates opportunities for sustaining more restaurants and boutique stores.
- Studio tours and art districts can attract more cultural tourists.
- In various communities throughout the United States, artists have moved into low-income communities and have worked with community development professionals to help revitalize them. Hoboken and Asbury Park are two of several examples in New Jersey where artists were involved in revitalizing low-income areas.
- Older industrial or warehousing areas that are suffering from vacancies might be attractive locations for artists who need large spaces (such as sculptors) or those who work with industrial products (such as metalwork artists.)
- The steady growth of self-employed artists over two business cycles indicates that the choice of individuals to move into the state or to become full-time artists are not based solely on economic factors. (Although we would expect to see some decline when 2009 figures become available.

Details

Figure 2: Self-employed artists in New Jersey, by county, 1998 to 2007

County	Self-employed artists	County	Self-employed artists
ATLANTIC	382	ATLANTIC	525
BERGEN	2,221	BERGEN	2,847
BURLINGTON	546	BURLINGTON	809
CAMDEN	838	CAMDEN	1,094
CAPE MAY	168	CAPE MAY	214
CUMBERLAND	98	CUMBERLAND	144
ESSEX	1,494	ESSEX	2,384
GLOUCESTER	313	GLOUCESTER	511
HUDSON	1,355	HUDSON	2,181
HUNTERDON	260	HUNTERDON	417
MERCER	776	MERCER	1,015
MIDDLESEX	992	MIDDLESEX	1,331
MONMOUTH	1,074	MONMOUTH	1,524
MORRIS	860	MORRIS	1,206
OCEAN	567	OCEAN	845
PASSAIC	578	PASSAIC	835
SALEM	50	SALEM	85
SOMERSET	541	SOMERSET	743
SUSSEX	203	SUSSEX	355
UNION	693	UNION	983
WARREN	126	WARREN	206

Figure 2: Map of self-employed artists, by county, 1998

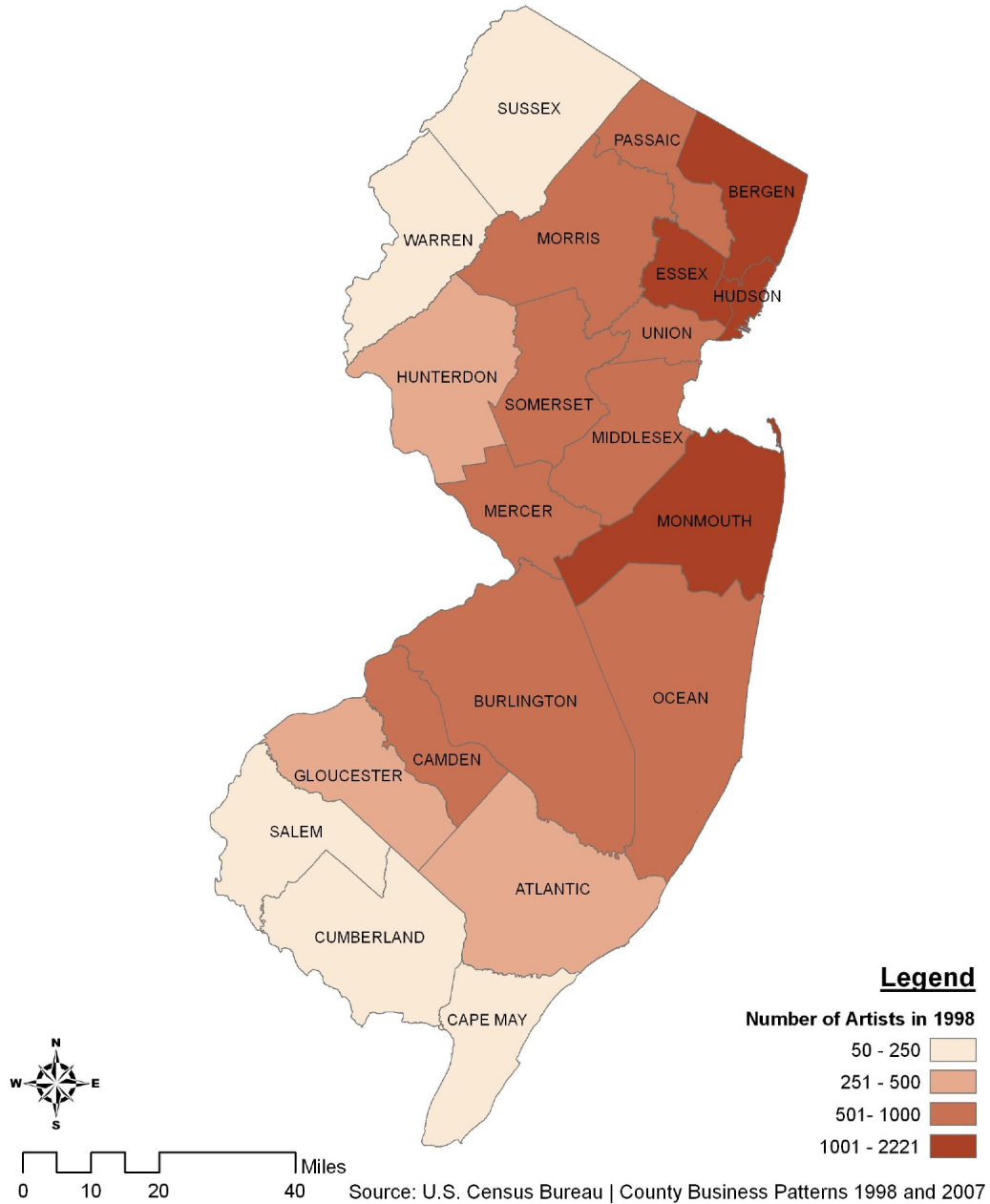


Figure 2: Map of self-employed artists, by county, 2007

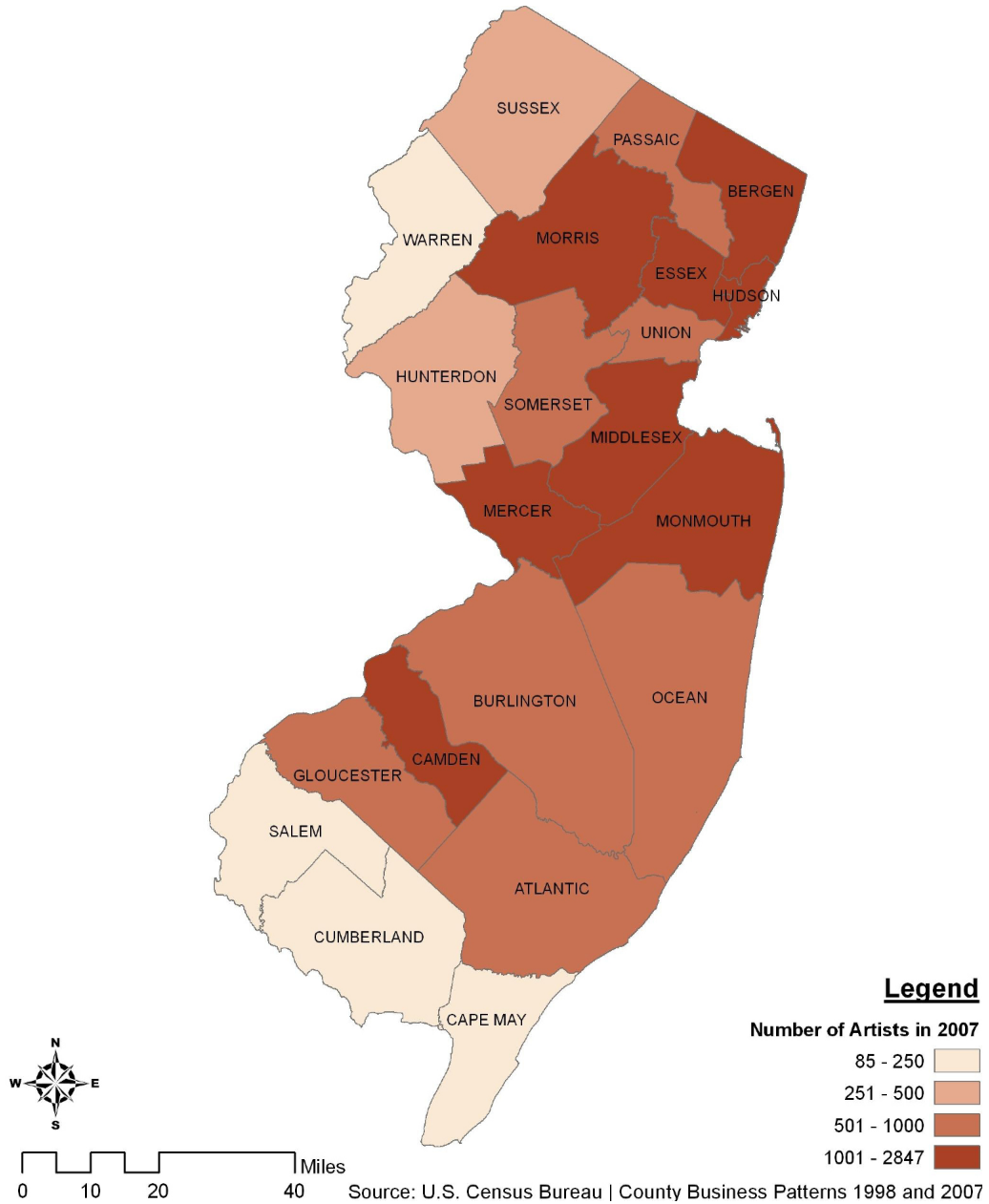


Figure 3: Percentage change in artists,writers and performers, by county. from 1998 to 2007

County	Change
SUSSEX	74.88%
SALEM	70.00%
WARREN	63.49%
GLOUCESTER	63.26%
HUDSON	60.96%
HUNTERDON	60.38%
ESSEX	59.57%
OCEAN	49.03%
BURLINGTON	48.17%
CUMBERLAND	46.94%
PASSAIC	44.46%
MONMOUTH	41.90%
UNION	41.85%
MORRIS	40.23%
ATLANTIC	37.43%
SOMERSET	37.34%
MIDDLESEX	34.17%
MERCER	30.80%
CAMDEN	30.55%
BERGEN	28.19%
CAPE MAY	27.38%

Additional comments

Self-employed artists are among the most mobile parts of the creative economy. Because the receipts of self-employed artists tend to be low, and original art is considered to be a luxury product, we would expect self-employed artists to be sensitive and respond to changes in the social and economic environment. As such, they can be seen as something like an “indicator species” for the creative economy.

Why are there more artists in New Jersey? Why are there so many more in counties that are not widely known for attracting artists? These are questions Arts Build Communities was unable to explore for this edition of the Creative Vitality Index. But we hope to explore these questions as we continue our study into the creative sector in New Jersey. Or we hope this research can inspire researchers to pursue these and other questions about self-employed artists in the state.

Why is the information a few years out of date? Our source is the Census Bureau’s County Business Patterns database. This is the most accurate database available for identifying all types of establishments, including self-employed businesses. Unfortunately, the database is usually two years out of date. This is not a problem for this research, as we are looking at long-term trends.

Source

United States Census Bureau, County Business Patterns. Self-employed artists, writers and performers, North American Industrial Classification System Code 7115

Data collected in Fall 2009